



## SPECIAL EDUCATION RIGHTS: ILLINOIS EDITION



# Early Intervention

This fact sheet answers:

- What Is Early Intervention and How Do I Get It for My Child?
- How Much Does Early Intervention Cost?
- How Long Can My Child Stay in the Program?
- And More

### What Is Early Intervention?

Early Intervention (EI) is a program that gives therapy to children who are younger than three years old and who have delays in how they walk, talk, learn, move, or behave. In EI, therapists meet with you and your child to help your child catch up. Services can be in your home or in the community.

Services can include:

- Speech
- Physical therapy
- Occupational therapy
- Social work
- Nutrition
- Family therapy
- Nursing
- Vision therapy
- Therapy to help your child learn

### How Do I Get EI for My Child?

You, your child's doctor, or a child care provider can call the Child and Family Connections (CFC) office at 800-323-4769 to ask for your child to be tested for EI.

A person from CFC will talk to you. Then your child is tested by EI professionals. At least three people should test your child.

The team will meet with you to talk about the tests. If your child tests below children her age, the team will make a plan to give your child EI services.

### Is There a Plan That Says What Services My Child Needs?

Yes. If your child needs EI, the team will make a plan called an Individualized Family Service Plan (IFSP). This is a written plan that says what areas your child needs help in, who is going to help her, how often your child will get therapy, and what her goals for growth are. The IFSP is a legal document.

The team should review the plan at least every six months to see if changes are needed.

### Do I Have a Say in What Services My Child Gets?

Yes. You are an important member of the IFSP. Speak up about what problems you are seeing with your child. Work with the service provider as she works with your child. This can teach you more about how to help your child.





## How Much Does EI Cost?

EI is free for families with children who receive All Kids.

For families who make more money, evaluations, assessments, and IFSP planning are free, but direct services like physical therapy and speech therapy will cost money.

The EI team will work with you to figure out if your services should be free.

No family should be denied services or have services delayed because they can't pay.



## How Long Can My Child Stay in EI?

Your child can stay in EI until age three. When your child turns three, she will switch from EI services to a school-based program. Your EI service coordinator should talk to your local school to ask for an evaluation six months before your child turns three.

You will need to bring your child in for testing. You, your EI provider, and the school will meet to have a “transition meeting” where you will go over the results of the tests. If your child needs an Individualized Education Program (IEP), she can go to preschool and start receiving services when she turns three. The IEP should be in place by the time your child turns three.

See Equip for Equality’s **“Individualized Education Programs (IEPs)”** and **“How to Help Your Child Be Successful in School - Getting a 504 Plan or IEP”** fact sheets for more information.

## What If There Is a Problem with My Child's EI?

Write the EI team to ask for a meeting to talk about the problem.

If the meeting doesn't fix things, you can file a complaint with the state. You must file within 1 year of the problem. You can find the form to make your complaint here: [http://bit.ly/EI\\_compaint](http://bit.ly/EI_compaint)

If your child's EI services have stopped before she is three and you do not agree, you should write in your complaint that you are asking for "**stay-put.**" This will keep your child in EI while the state looks at the problem. The state has 60 days to investigate the problem. ■



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## Have More Questions?

Call our Special Education Rights Parent Helpline.

**1-866-KIDS-046** (1-866-543-7046)  
[SpecialEd@equipforequality.org](mailto:SpecialEd@equipforequality.org)  
[www.equipforequality.org/helpline](http://www.equipforequality.org/helpline)